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Stanford audience

Turner calls CIA the best

STANFORD (UPI) — CIA Director Stansfield Turner received an enthusiastic reception from a packed auditorium of Stanford University students last night after he told them the intelligence agency was the best in the world.

"We are producing the best intelligence in the world, although we are not complacent," Turner told the audience of 600. "President Carter has repeatedly said that one of the best surprises for him since becoming President was the high quality of intelligence coming to him."

In contrast to the reception Turner would have received a few years ago, the audience applauded him enthusiastically at several points in his speech.

Turner said it was time for the nation to "place a modicum of confidence in elected officials."

"There is a lack of respect for classified material in our country when people like Daniel Ellsberg feel they can decide for themselves what should or shouldn't be classified, and I submit to you that is nothing less than chaos."

Ellsberg released Pentagon Papers dealing with classified information on America's involvement in Vietnam.

"When we stop flagellating ourselves and take a constructive approach to the CIA, we'll make progress," Turner said. "We will overcome suspicion and distrust over a period of time."

"It's clear that in some instances the CIA did things it should not have done. I'm not trying to exhume the past. I'm here to see we have the best intelligence community this country can have in the future."

A handful of hecklers held protest posters and chanted sporadically during the talk, but there were no major disruptions.